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CLAIMS

1. An apparatus for removing adhesive labels from garment hangers, the apparatus comprising:

washing means adapted to direct pressurised liquid onto an adhesive label of at least one garment hanger for melting adhesive of said label and removing said label from the hanger;

loading means for transporting the or each said hanger towards said washing means;

unloading means for transporting the or each said hanger away from said washing means; and

drying means for drying the or each said hanger subsequently to removal of an adhesive label therefrom.

2. An apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the loading means comprises at least one rotatable shaft having a respective helical groove for engaging a hook of at least one said hanger, wherein rotation of the or each shaft about its respective longitudinal axis in use moves hangers along the or each said shaft towards said washing means.

3. An apparatus according to claim 2, wherein at least one said rotatable shaft has a respective groove-free portion for receiving at least one said hanger prior to movement of the hanger towards the washing means.

4. An apparatus according to claim 2 or 3, wherein the depth of at least one said groove increases in use in a direction towards said washing means.

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5. An apparatus according to any one of the preceding claims, wherein said washing means comprises spraying means for directing at least one stream of liquid at elevated temperature onto an adhesive label of at least one hanger.

6. An apparatus according to claim 5, wherein said spraying means is adapted to direct at least one said stream in a side-to-side and/or up and down motion.

7. An apparatus according to claim 5 or 6, further comprising recycling means for recycling said liquid subsequently to spraying thereof onto at least one hanger.

8. An apparatus according to any one of the preceding claims, wherein said unloading means comprises at least one rotatable shaft having a respective helical groove for engaging a hook of at least one said hanger, wherein rotation of the or each shaft about its respective longitudinal axis in use moves hangers along the or each said shaft away from said washing means.

9. An apparatus according to any one of the preceding claims, wherein said drying means at least partially surrounds said unloading means.

10. An apparatus according to claim 9, wherein said drying means comprises an elongate chamber for drying at lease one said hanger.

11. An apparatus according to any one of the preceding claims, further comprising further drying means for at least partially drying at least one hanger subsequently to washing thereof and prior to transport thereof by said unloading means.

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12. An apparatus according to any one of the preceding claims, further comprising support means for supporting a hanger during washing thereof by said washing means.

13. An apparatus according to claim 12, wherein said support means comprises a rotary support member for supporting at least one hanger and adapted to rotate to move the or each said hanger from a position facing said loading means to a position facing said washing means and/or from a position facing said washing means to a position facing said unloading means.

14. An apparatus according to claim 13, further comprising locking means for locking at least one said hanger in position on said rotary member.

15. An apparatus according to claim 14, wherein said locking means comprises at least one hook receiving member for receiving a respective hook of a hanger, and is adapted to lock at least one hanger in position on said rotary member in response to receiving a hook on at least one said hook receiving member.

16. An apparatus for removing adhesive labels from garment hangers, the apparatus substantially as hereinbefore described with reference to the accompanying drawings.